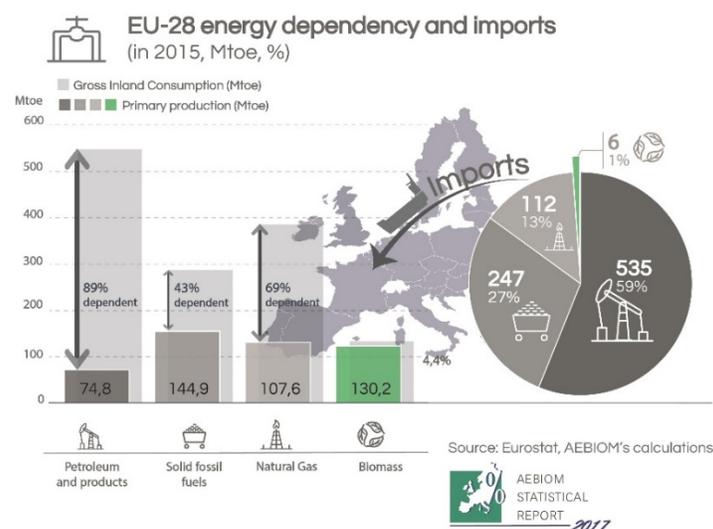


Ahead of ENVI Committee's vote on bioenergy sustainability, new insights revealed by AEBIOM's latest Statistical Report

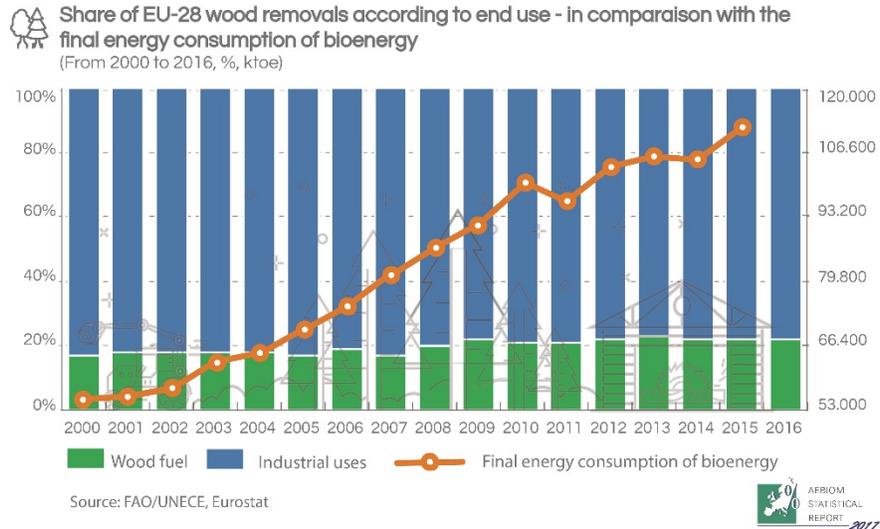
Brussels, 17.10.17 – *Bioenergy is Europe's most significant source of renewable energy — both in terms of energy production and job creation. Findings from AEBIOM's 2017 Statistical Report, released on October 17th, confirm that bioenergy is among the most effective options to achieve Europe's energy transition. The publication's release, occurring a few days before a key vote by the Parliament's ENVI Committee on sustainability criteria for bioenergy, brings clarity to a debate that has been highly misrepresented.*

With the release of the Clean Energy Package for all Europeans in late 2016, the European Commission proposed a balanced approach considering pragmatic and cost-effective criteria to ensure the sustainability of biomass used in Europe to produce energy. However, recent debates in Parliament (ENVI) have revived misleading arguments and statements which run counter to the evidence. Final decisions on the future criteria will have an important impact on the whole sector and on the European 2030 climate energy targets. On this basis, the European Biomass Association (AEBIOM) recently published the 10th Edition of its Statistical Report, highlighting the gap between the ongoing debate in the ENVI Committee and the reality on the ground.

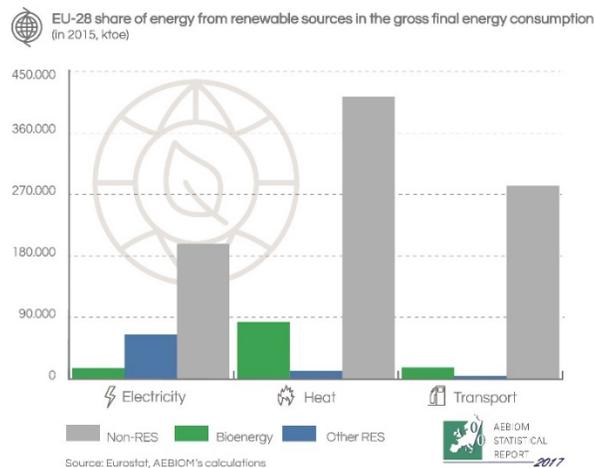
Ongoing discussions are wrongly focused on biomass imports from third countries, even though the facts are evident in the data: bioenergy represents 1% of total EU energy imports and only 4,4% of total used of biomass for energy. According to Jean-Marc Jossart, AEBIOM Secretary-General, “we will miss the point if the final decision on sustainability is made only depending on biomass imports. 95% of the biomass consumed today is locally sourced in the EU. To address the energy security issue seriously, sustainability criteria should allow bioenergy to keep playing its role, regardless of where it is sourced provided it is sustainably sourced and delivering carbon savings.”



Another important finding from AEBIOM's report is that European forests are not managed solely for energy purposes. The share of wood harvested in EU forests used in the energy sector has been rather stable (20% on average since 2000), while bioenergy consumption has more than doubled over the same period. Contrary to common belief, European forests are expanding and the lack of active management is gradually becoming an issue in many Member States as forest fires and epidemics could increase. In this context, for many public and private forest owners, bioenergy represents an incentive to revitalise their forests by improving their management.



Finally, the report confirms that bioenergy is and will remain a key driver for the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector. With fossil fuels still amounting to 81,4% of the energy sources in this sector, bioenergy, which represents today about 90% of renewables, is among the most effective solutions to drive the energy transition. Replacing aging stoves, developing the use of cogeneration to supply the industrial sectors and district heating plants is the way forward to achieve the decarbonisation of the European heating and cooling sector.



“While current EU discussions on the EU’s sustainability criteria tend to be focused on the biopower sector which is already delivering significant benefits in some Member States, the renewable heating and cooling sector tends to be forgotten. However, this sector is the unsung hero with a formidable workload. The coming EU criteria should not hamper the development of this sector based on political calculations rather than fact-based evidence” stated Didzis Palejs, AEBIOM’s President.

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